Convergent, Discriminant, and Predictive Validity of a Scale to Detect Symptom Exaggeration

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INTRODUCTION:

- People with high levels of pathological personality characteristics are at high risk of distorting their responses on tests of their psychological functioning.
- Recent research on pathological personality trait assessment has thus focused on indices of test-takers' response validity.
- One such index is the Infrequency scale (INF) of the Computerized Adaptive Test of Personality Disorder (CAT-PD), a well validated test of pathological traits.
- The CAT-PD-INF measures extreme and bizarre responses to personality items that may reflect response exaggeration.
- However, it has not yet been validated.
- In this study we examine how the CAT-PD-INF compares with the validity scales from another established test of pathological personality.

METHOD

- Participants were 363 workers on Amazon's MTurk.
- We compared the CAT-PD-INF to select validity scales from the Schedule for Nonadaptive and Adaptive Personality-2 (SNAP-2): Deviance (DEV), Rare Virtues (RV) and Variable Response Inconsistency (VRIN).

RESULTS

- CAT-PD-INF correlated higher with SNAP-2-DEV than with either SNAP-2-RV or SNAP-2-VRIN ($t \ge 9.67$).
- ROC analysis suggested a cut score of 23 on CAT-PD-INF discriminated between deviant and non-deviant responses.

DISCUSSION

- These findings suggest the convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of the CAT-PD-INF scale.
- This study provides preliminary evidence for the CAT-PD-INF as a predictor of response exaggeration.
- Future research can extend these findings by examining the predictive validity of the CAT-PD-INF with respect to a sample in which respondents deliberately feign their answers to questions.

Evidence for a symptom exaggeration scale on a measure of pathological personality traits





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Table 1. Correlations Between Study Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. CAT-PD-INF	(.96)			
2. SNAP-2-DEV	.70*	(.76)		
3. SNAP-2-RV	.14*	.10	(.63)	
4. SNAP-2-VRIN	.11*	.20*	.04	(.92)

Note: * indicates r is statistically significant at p < .05. Cronbach's α on diagonal. CAT-PD-INF = Infrequency; DEV = Deviance; RV = Rare Virtues; VRIN = Variable Response Inconsistency.

Table 2. Sensitivity and specificity for potential CAT-PD-INF cut scores

	Cut score	SN	SP	
	21	.88	.79	
	22	.88	.82	
	23	.86	.84	
	24	.84	.86	
	25	.82	.88	
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Note. SN = sensitivity; SP = specificity

Figure 1. ROC Curve of CAT-PD-INF Predicting SNAP-2-DEV Cut Score



